



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

OCT 08 2014

Ms. Lindsay Ries
Fire Island National Seashore
120 Laurel Street
Patchogue, NY 11772

Dear Ms. Ries:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Draft White-tailed Deer Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (draft EIS) for Fire Island National Seashore, New York, CEQ #20140210, prepared by the Fire Island National Seashore staff of the National Park Service.

The purpose of the draft EIS is to develop a deer management strategy that reduces undesirable human-deer interactions in Fire Island National Seashore (Seashore) where deer populations have been expanding since the late 1960s. Negative impacts of the expanding deer population include severe negative impacts on vegetation and cultural landscapes as well as increases in undesirable human-deer interactions. There has also been an increase in the incidence of Lyme disease among Fire Island residents. Fire Island National Seashore staff and researchers have documented a substantial decline in the diversity and abundance of key plant species in the Sunken Forest, which is one of the Seashore's rarest plant communities, as well as impacts to native vegetation in other areas of the Seashore and the cultural landscape of the William Floyd Estate. The goal of the plan is to support protection, preservation and restoration of native vegetation and cultural resources throughout the Seashore while reducing human-deer interactions.

The National Park Service selected Alternative D as the preferred alternative. Deer browsing management actions include:

- Exclosure fencing in the Sunken Forest;
- Fencing an area that encloses the historic core of William Floyd Estate;
- A small scale fenced area of William Floyd Estate protecting special status species;
- Deer population reduction to appropriate density through sharpshooting, capture and euthanasia where appropriate (for deer seen approaching humans to reduce risk of disease transmission), and public hunting;
- Maintenance of deer population levels through the use of fertility control when appropriate methods become available and continuation of methods discussed above until fertility control is available.

EPA supports the National Park Service's selected Alternative D. EPA rates the DEIS an LO or "Lack of Objection." Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIS for the White-tailed Deer Management Plan. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact Stephanie Lamster at 212-637-3465.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Judy-Ann Mitchell", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Judy-Ann Mitchell, Chief
Sustainability and Multimedia Programs Branch